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PUMPKINS AND SQUASHES
BAKED, STEAMED, OR IN PIE

Both the pumpkin and its close relative, the squash, were cultivated in America long before white men arrived on the scene. They are mentioned by many of the early explorers. Much alike botanically, they taste alike when suitably seasoned, and are cared for during the winter in the same way -- stored in a dry, warm place. Both are usually cheap. The Bureau of Home Economics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says that their yellow color indicates that, like most yellow-fleshed vegetables, they contribute vitamin A to the diet. This is the vitamin that helps to build resistance to infections, to maintain vitality, and to stimulate growth.

Pumpkin pie is doubtless the most popular pumpkin dish, but pumpkin, like squash, may be baked or mashed and served as a vegetable. For mashed squash or pumpkin, steam the pieces if possible, in preference to boiling. This takes a little longer -- 40 to 50 minutes if the flesh is hard -- but the flavor is much better than when cooked in water. Pare before or after steaming, and when tender, mash and season with butter, salt, and pepper, adding a very little sugar if necessary to bring out the sweetness.

Baked pumpkin or squash on the shell, pumpkin corn bread, squash rolls or biscuit, and pumpkin custard are other possibilities besides pumpkin pie and squash pie. Some of the small squashes are attractively served if cut in half and baked, one half being just right for a portion. Pumpkin can be cooked and stored in a covered crock in a cold place for weeks.

Baked Winter Squash or Pumpkin

Wash the squash or pumpkin, cut into pieces the size for individual servings, and remove the seeds and stringy portion but leave the rind on. Put rind side down in a baking pan, season with salt, pepper, and butter or other fat, cover, and bake in a moderate oven for about an hour, or until tender. Toward the last, remove the cover, and let the squash or pumpkin brown slightly on top. Serve hot.

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Pumpkin Custard

1 pint mashed pumpkin cooked or canned	1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs	1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup milk	1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
	1/8 teaspoon mace

Beat the eggs slightly and add the pumpkin and other ingredients. Pour into a greased baking dish, set in a pan of hot water, and bake in a moderate oven (350°F.) for about an hour, or until set in the center. Or bake in individual custard cups for a shorter time.

To vary the flavor, omit the cinnamon and mace, and sprinkle the top of the custard with grated cheese before baking.

Pumpkin custard is particularly good served with ham or cold meat.

Pumpkin or Squash Pie

1-1/2 cups cooked pumpkin or squash	1/4 teaspoon mace
1 cup milk	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar	2 eggs
1 teaspoon cinnamon	2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon allspice	Pastry

Heat the pumpkin or squash, milk, sugar, spices, and salt in a double boiler, add the beaten eggs and butter, and mix well. Pour the hot filling into a deep baked pastry shell, and bake in a moderate oven (350°F.) for about 30 minutes, or until the filling sets.

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